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#4 FEB 10

Exclusive In-Game Reward Inside! Collect all 12. See page 28 for details on collecting the Cloak of Shadows.

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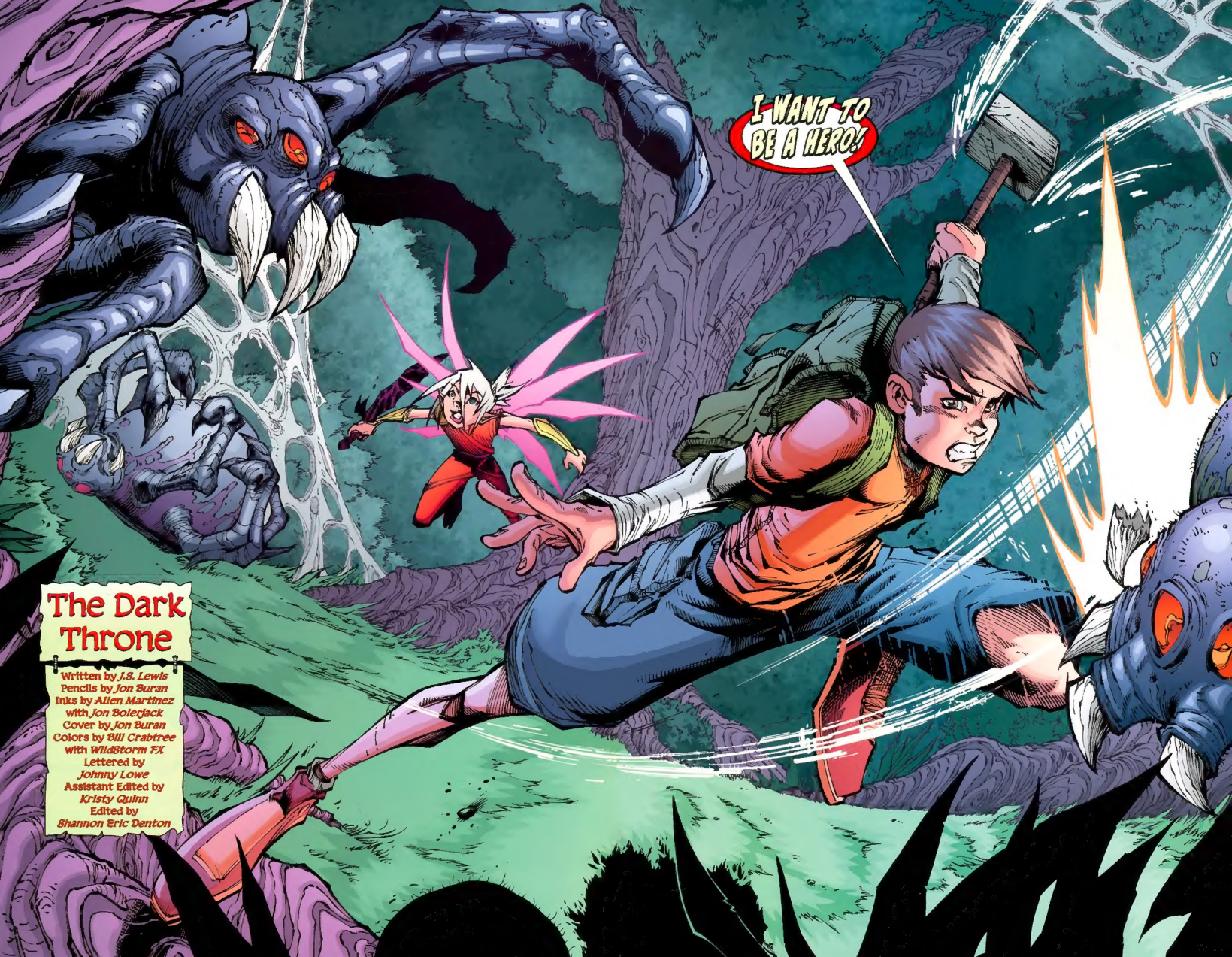
A FEW WEEKS AGO I WAS BASICALLY NOBODY. I COULD WALK DOWN THE STREET WITHOUT A SINGLE PERSON KNOWING WHO I WAS.
IT WAS LIKE I WAS INVISIBLE.
EVERY DAY MY UNCLE WOULD TELL ME THAT I WAS LUCKY TO HAVE A JOB SWEEPING THE FLOORS AND TAKING OUT THE TRASH AT HIS BAKERY.
HE'D FOLLOW THAT UP BY SAYING THAT IF I WORKED HARD, I JUST MIGHT BECOME A PASTRY CHEF ONE DAY.
LOOK, THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH BEING A PASTRY CHEF. IT'S JUST THAT...I DON'T KNOW...I JUST WANT TO DO SOMETHING EXCITING WITH MY LIFE.
IN MY BOOK, WAKING UP AT THREE IN THE MORNING TO ROLL OUT DOUGH AND FROST CUPCAKES DOESN'T QUALIFY.
SO THE DAY I GOT MY HALF OF THE REWARD FOR FINDING THE QUEEN'S COUSIN IN BRIARWOOD, I QUIT THE BAKERY.
I USED MOST OF THE COINS TO UPGRADE MY KART. EVERYONE THOUGHT I WAS CRAZY, BUT I WON THE SG TOUR 400. NOW I HAVE ENOUGH WEALTH TO BUY MY UNCLE'S BAKERY.
HECK, I COULD OPEN UP A CHAIN OF BAKERIES IF I WANTED TO.
BUT IT'S LIKE I SAID, I DON'T WANT TO BE A PASTRY CHEF.


I WANT TO BE A HERO!
The Dark Throne
Written by J.S. Lewis
Pencils by Jon Buran
Inks by Allen Martinez
with Jon Bolejack
Cover by Jon Buran
Colors by Bill Crabtree
with WildStorm FX
Lettered by
Johnny Lowe
Assistant Edited by
Kristy Quinn
Edited by
Shannon Eric Denton

IF YOU DON'T STOP GRANDSTANDING, YOU'RE GOING TO BE A DEAD HERO.
I KNEW IT WAS THERE ALL ALONG.
I JUST WANTED TO SEE IF I COULD TRUST YOU WITH MY LIFE, THAT'S ALL.
YEAH, RIGHT.

WHY WON'T YOU EVER LISTEN TO ME, SNORG? I'M TELLING YOU, I HEARD VOICES OVER THERE.
THIS FROM THE GUY WHO THOUGHT HIS NEIGHBOR'S DOG WAS A WEREWOLF IN DISGUISE. HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO BELIEVE ANYTHING YOU SAY?
JUST WAIT, YOU'LL SEE!
WE NEED TO GO.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
WE CAME HERE TO FIND DARKTHORNE'S CASTLE. IF THOSE ARE CHUGAWUG SOLDIERS, THEY CAN TAKE US RIGHT TO IT.
WHAT THE...
NOT IF THEY THINK WE'RE SPIES...NOW GET DOWN HERE!
IF THIS IS ANOTHER ONE OF YOUR WILD GOOSE CHASES, GORG, I'M GOING TO SEE TO IT THAT CAPTAIN CHUGUG HAS YOU SCRUBBING THE POTS AND PANS FOR A MONTH!
LOOK OVER THERE. SEE? I TOLD YOU!

I WONDER WHO KILLED ALL THESE SPIDERS. NOT THAT I MIND OR ANYTHING. SPIDERS GIVE ME THE CREEPS, BUT STILL...
SOLDIERS FROM SANCTUARY, THAT'S WHO.
BUT THEY NEVER MAKE IT TO THIS PART OF THE FOREST.
A SCOUT TEAM COULD HAVE. I BET THEY WERE SENT TO SCOPE OUT BRIARWOOD CASTLE. I CAN STILL SMELL THEIR STENCH.
REALLY ALL I CAN SMELL IS SPIDER GUTS.
WHAT'S THIS?

GEE, SNORG, IT KIND OF LOOKS LIKE A HAMMER. MAYBE THEY JUST WANTED TO BUILD A CABIN, OR...
WOULD YOU STOP BEING SUCH A NITWIT! WE'RE ON THE BRINK OF WAR, AND THIS HAMMER WAS MEANT TO POUND HEADS, NOT NAILS.
AND PEOPLE DON'T JUST LEAVE HAMMERS LIKE THIS LYING AROUND.
YEAH, SOMEONE COULD STUB A TOE.
WHY DON'T YOU HEAD BACK TO CAMP AND REPORT ON WHAT WE FOUND. I NEED TO FINISH MY PATROL.
BUT CAPTAIN CHUGUG SAID THAT WE AREN'T SUPPOSED TO GO ON PATROL BY OURSELVES.
LOOK, I KNOW WHAT THE CAPTAIN SAID. JUST TRUST ME, WILL YOU?
ALL RIGHT, SNORG. I WARNED YOU.
YEAH, YEAH. NOW GET GOING.

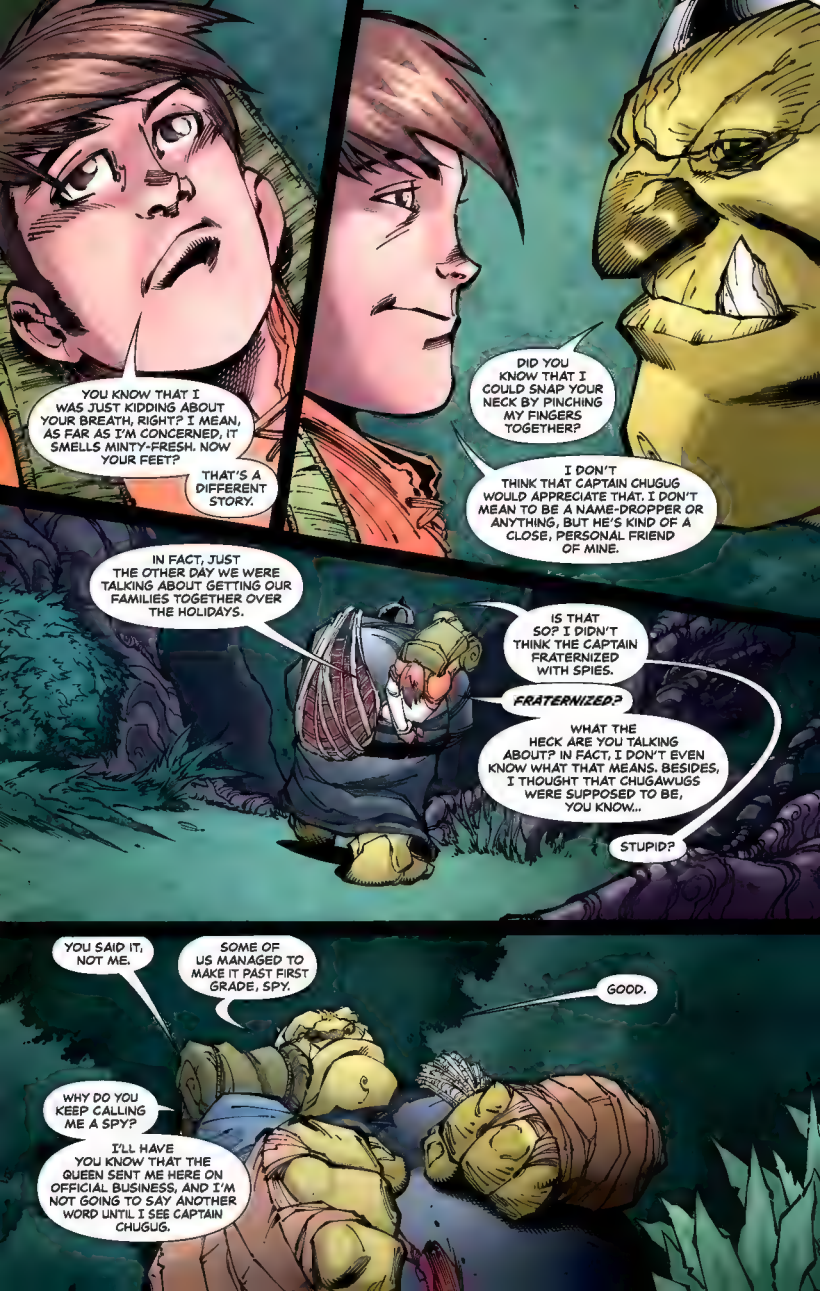
SOMETHING ISN'T RIGHT.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? THEY'RE GOING AWAY, AREN'T THEY?
THE LITTLE ONE IS UP TO SOMETHING, AND I DON'T LIKE IT.
STAY HERE.
BUT...
...I HATE IT WHEN SHE DOES THAT.

I GOT YOU.
!

OOOMPH!
THUD!
YOU MIGHT AS WELL COME OUT FROM YOUR HIDING SPOT, HUMAN. I KNOW THAT YOU LOST YOUR WEAPON, NOT THAT IT WOULD MATTER.
CHUGAWUGS DON'T CURL UP AND DIE LIKE SPIDERS.

COME NOW, BOY. YOU REALLY AREN'T THAT STUPID, ARE YOU?
DIDN'T YOUR MOTHER TEACH YOU THAT IT ISN'T VERY NICE TO CALL PEOPLE "STUPID?" BESIDES, I PREFER THE WORD HEROIC, BUT WHATEVER...

...YOU KNOW, I DIDN'T THINK THAT YOU'D BE ABLE TO MOVE THAT FAST.
HEY, WATCH IT. I JUST HAD THIS SHIRT LAUNDERED.
THAT SHOULD BE THE LEAST OF YOUR WORRIES, SPY.
YOU WOULDN'T SAY THAT IF YOU SAW HOW MUCH I PAID FOR THIS SHIRT. THEN AGAIN, COMPARED TO YOUR BREATH, MAYBE THE SHIRT ISN'T SUCH A BIG DEAL.
HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT FLOSSING?

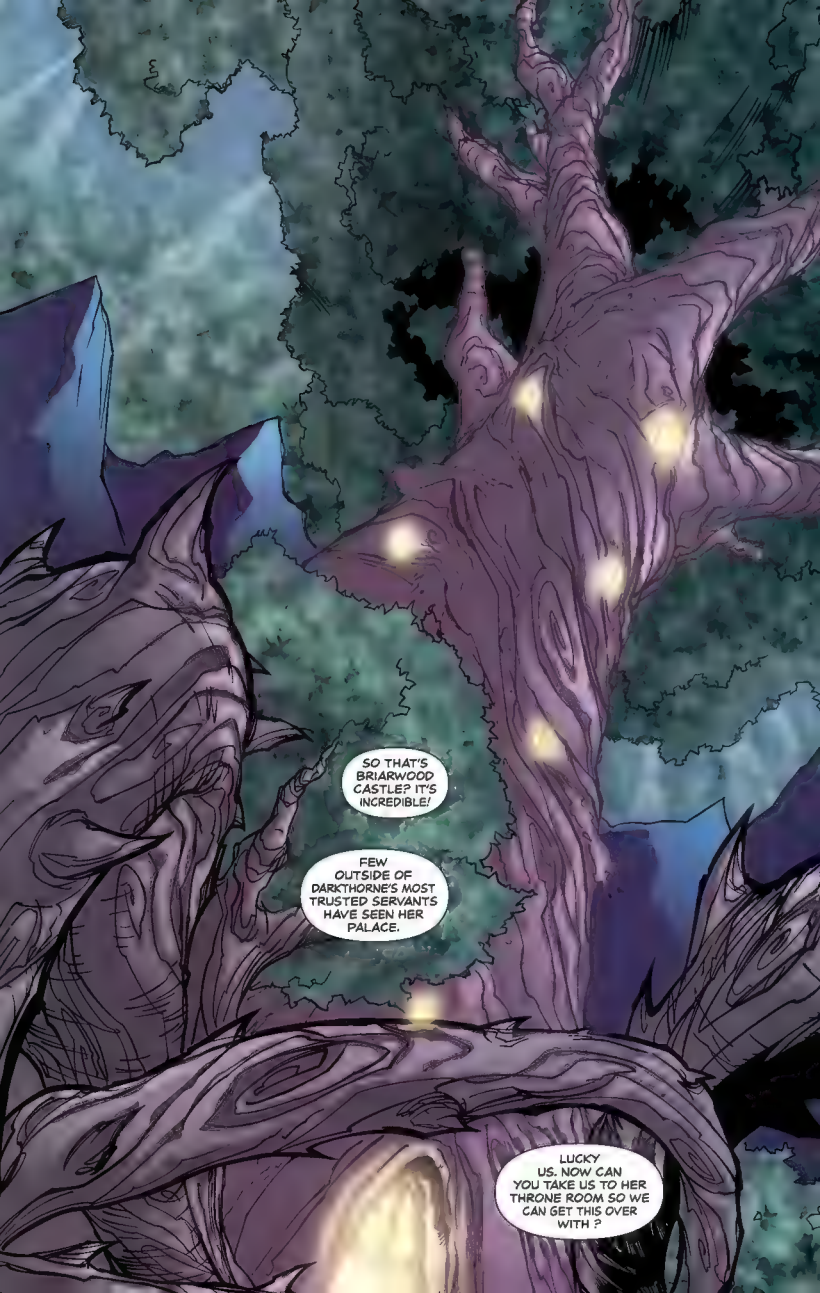

YOU KNOW THAT I WAS JUST KIDDING ABOUT YOUR BREATH, RIGHT? I MEAN, AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, IT SMELLS MINTY-FRESH. NOW YOUR FEET?
THAT'S A DIFFERENT STORY.
DID YOU KNOW THAT I COULD SNAP YOUR NECK BY PINCHING MY FINGERS TOGETHER?
I DON'T THINK THAT CAPTAIN CHUGUG WOULD APPRECIATE THAT. I DON'T MEAN TO BE A NAME-DROPPER OR ANYTHING, BUT HE'S KIND OF A CLOSE, PERSONAL FRIEND OF MINE.
IN FACT, JUST THE OTHER DAY WE WERE TALKING ABOUT GETTING OUR FAMILIES TOGETHER OVER THE HOLIDAYS.
IS THAT SO? I DIDN'T THINK THE CAPTAIN FRATERNIZED WITH SPIES.
FRATERNIZED?
WHAT THE HECK ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? IN FACT, I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS. BESIDES, I THOUGHT THAT CHUGAWUGS WERE SUPPOSED TO BE, YOU KNOW...
STUPID?
YOU SAID IT, NOT ME.
SOME OF US MANAGED TO MAKE IT PAST FIRST GRADE, SPY.
GOOD.
WHY DO YOU KEEP CALLING ME A SPY?
I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW THAT THE QUEEN SENT ME HERE ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS, AND I'M NOT GOING TO SAY ANOTHER WORD UNTIL I SEE CAPTAIN CHUGUG.

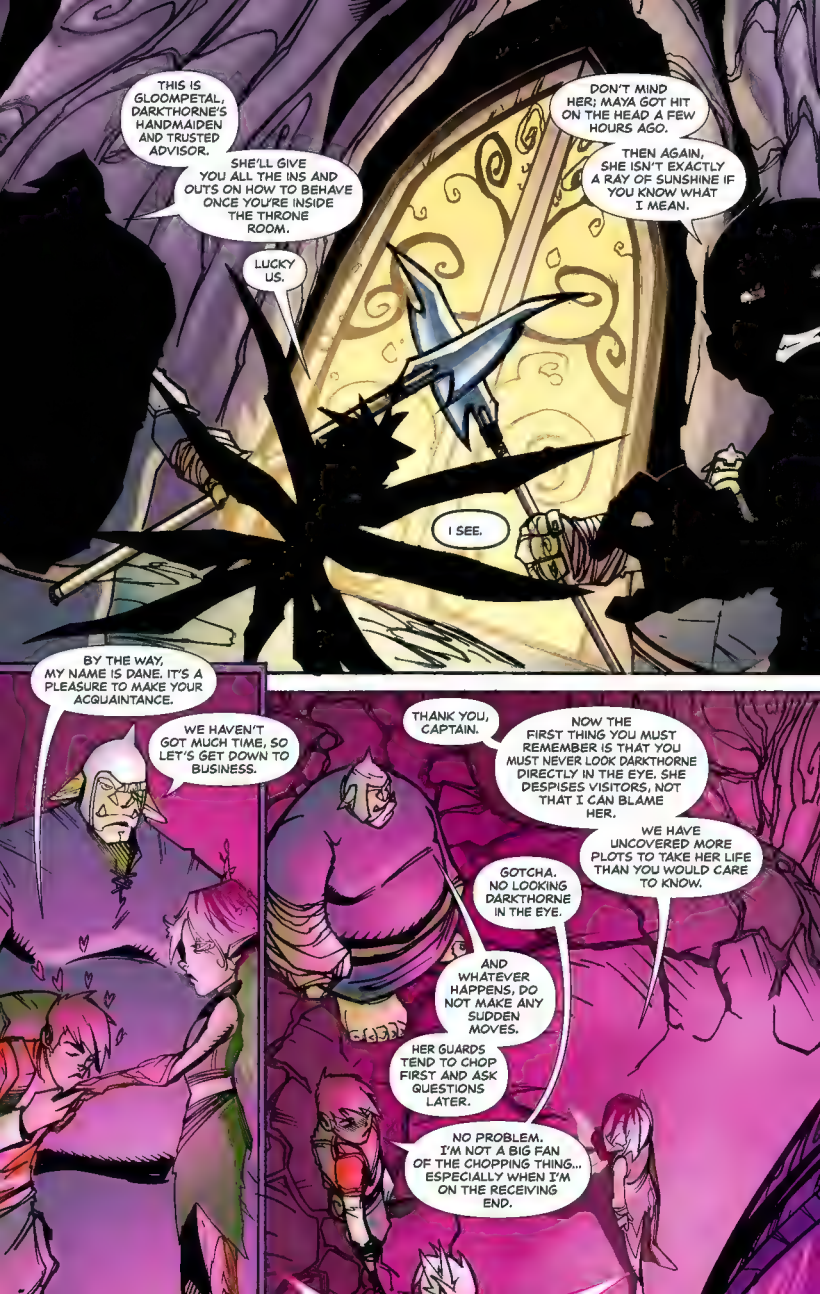
...AND DID YOU KNOW THAT YOU HAVE A BOIL ON YOUR NECK THE SIZE OF A WATERMELON? I HAVE A GREAT NIGHT CREAM FOR STUFF LIKE THAT.
IF YOU DON'T STOP TALKING, I'M GOING TO REACH AROUND AND PULL YOUR TONGUE OUT OF YOUR MOUTH.
BESIDES, I THOUGHT YOU WEREN'T GOING TO SAY ANOTHER WORD UNTIL YOU SAW THE CAPTAIN. YOU HAVEN'T STOPPED TALKING SINCE YOU MADE THAT RIDICULOUS THREAT.
YOU'RE ALSO GOING TO WANT TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT HAIR GROWING OUT OF YOUR EARS. I DOUBT ANYONE MAKES TWEEZERS BIG ENOUGH, BUT YOU COULD PROBABLY USE A HEDGE TRIMMER. OH, AND THAT REMINDS ME...
SORRY. I DIDN'T REALIZE THAT I WAS STILL TALKING. IT'S JUST THAT WE SEEMED TO BE MAKING A REAL CONNECTION. YOU KNOW, LIKE A BROMANCE OR SOMETHING. MY BEST FRIEND MOVED AWAY LAST YEAR, AND...
ENOUGH!
HA HA
HA HA
HA HA HA HA
THAT WAY, SIR.
WHERE IS THE CAPTAIN?

LOOK CAPTAIN, IT'S SNORGIE!
I TOLD YOU NOT TO CALL ME THAT.
SORRY. IT'S JUST THAT WHEN YOU DIDN'T COME BACK RIGHT AWAY, I THOUGHT SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAPPENED TO YOU.
I ASSUME YOU HAVE A GOOD EXCUSE FOR FINISHING YOUR PATROL ALONE AND DISOBEYING A DIRECT COMMAND, SNORG?
ACTUALLY, I HAVE TWO GOOD EXCUSES.
CAPTAIN CHUGUG, IT'S ME... DANE! WILL YOU TELL THIS OAF TO LET US GO?
I TOLD HIM THAT YOU WOULDN'T BE VERY HAPPY WHEN YOU SAW HOW HE'S TREATED US, BUT HE WOULDN'T LISTEN TO ME.
THIS BABBLING MORON INSISTS THAT THE TWO OF YOU GO WAY BACK. IN FACT, HE SAYS THAT YOU PLAN ON SPENDING THE HOLIDAYS TOGETHER.
IS THAT SO?

I GUESS THAT DEPENDS ON WHETHER OR NOT MY NEPHEW, JUNIOR, EATS ALL THE TURKEY BEFORE I GET THERE.
YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS.
I HATE SAYING THAT I TOLD YOU SO, BUT...
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME THAT JUNIOR WAS ON YOUR PIT CREW?
I DIDN'T KNOW THE TWO OF YOU WERE RELATED.
HE NEVER MENTIONED ANYTHING ABOUT IT.
IT DOESN'T SURPRISE ME. HE WAS NEVER MUCH FOR THE MILITARY.
I SUPPOSE HE TAKES AFTER MY SISTER THAT WAY.
SHE WOULDN'T SO MUCH AS SWAT A MOSQUITO WHEN WE WERE KIDS.
THAT DEFINITELY SOUNDS LIKE JUNIOR.
SO WHAT BRINGS YOU BACK TO BRIARWOOD?
I WAS KIND OF HOPING THAT WE COULD TALK ABOUT THAT IN PRIVATE.
YOU HEARD THE MAN. NOW SKIDADDLE!
BUT...
YOU HEARD ME, SNORG. AND LEAVE THE GIRL.
YES SIR.

ʒgroanʒ
IS SHE OKAY?
I'M FINE.
I APOLOGIZE FOR SNORG'S ROUGH TREATMENT, BUT WE'VE CAUGHT MORE THAN A DOZEN OF THE QUEEN'S SPIES SKULKING AROUND IN BRIARWOOD.
IF THE INTELLIGENCE WE HAVE GATHERED IS CORRECT, WE EXPECT HER ARMY TO ATTACK AT ANY MOMENT.
MAYBE NOT.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
THE QUEEN IS SICK.
IN FACT, SHE MIGHT NOT MAKE IT THROUGH THE NIGHT.
THIS SOUNDS LIKE A TRICK TO ME.
I SAW HER WITH MY OWN EYES.
QUEEN VALERIAN BARELY HAD ENOUGH STRENGTH TO STAND UP.
AND SHE WAS COUGHING UP BLOOD.
IS THAT THE TRUTH, MAYA?
OKAY, MAYBE I MADE UP THE PART ABOUT THE BLOOD, BUT SHE DIDN'T LOOK GOOD.
IT SEEMS STRANGE THAT YOU WOULD TELL ME THIS GIVEN THE CURRENT CLIMATE BETWEEN SANCTUARY AND BRIARWOOD.
THAT'S THE THING. WE WERE SENT HERE TO GET THE CONTENTS FROM THE BOX THAT YOU GAVE US.
WHATEVER WAS INSIDE IS SUPPOSED TO BE ABLE TO SAVE THE QUEEN, AND IT'S MISSING.


SO THAT'S BRIARWOOD CASTLE? IT'S INCREDIBLE!
FEW OUTSIDE OF DARKTHORNE'S MOST TRUSTED SERVANTS HAVE SEEN HER PALACE.
LUCKY US. NOW CAN YOU TAKE US TO HER THRONE ROOM SO WE CAN GET THIS OVER WITH ?


THIS IS GLOOMPETAL, DARKTHORNE'S HANDMAIDEN AND TRUSTED ADVISOR.
SHE'LL GIVE YOU ALL THE INS AND OUTS ON HOW TO BEHAVE ONCE YOU'RE INSIDE THE THRONE ROOM.
LUCKY US.
DON'T MIND HER; MAYA GOT HIT ON THE HEAD A FEW HOURS AGO.
THEN AGAIN, SHE ISN'T EXACTLY A RAY OF SUNSHINE IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.
I SEE.
BY THE WAY, MY NAME IS DANE. IT'S A PLEASURE TO MAKE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE.
WE HAVEN'T GOT MUCH TIME, SO LET'S GET DOWN TO BUSINESS.
THANK YOU, CAPTAIN.
NOW THE FIRST THING YOU MUST REMEMBER IS THAT YOU MUST NEVER LOOK DARKTHORNE DIRECTLY IN THE EYE. SHE DESPISES VISITORS, NOT THAT I CAN BLAME HER.
WE HAVE UNCOVERED MORE PLOTS TO TAKE HER LIFE THAN YOU WOULD CARE TO KNOW.
GOTCHA. NO LOOKING DARKTHORNE IN THE EYE.
AND WHATEVER HAPPENS, DO NOT MAKE ANY SUDDEN MOVES.
HER GUARDS TEND TO CHOP FIRST AND ASK QUESTIONS LATER.
NO PROBLEM. I'M NOT A BIG FAN OF THE CHOPPING THING... ESPECIALLY WHEN I'M ON THE RECEIVING END.

FreeRealms™

CLAIM YOUR REWARD!

NEW ACCOUNTS

1. GO TO THE ***FREE REALMS*** WEBSITE - HTTP://WWW.FREEREALMS.COM
2. ENTER THE CODE INTO THE TEXT FIELD IN THE "REDEEM-A-CODE" BOX ON THE LEFT HAND SIDE OF THE HOME PAGE
3. CLICK THE GREEN "GO!" BUTTON
4. THESE CODES WORK WITH NEW AND EXISTING ACCOUNTS, SO IF YOU'RE A NEW PLAYER YOU'LL HAVE TO CREATE AN ACCOUNT AT THIS POINT IF YOU WANT TO CLAIM THE CODE; ON THE ***FREE REALMS*** LOG IN PAGE, CLICK THE "FIRST TIME HERE? START PLAYING FOR FREE!" HYPERLINK.
5. COMPLETE THE NEW ACCOUNT REGISTRATION
6. THE "CONGRATULATIONS!" SCREEN WILL APPEAR, ACKNOWLEDGING YOUR SUCCESSFUL CODE REDEMPTION AND YOUR RECEIPT OF THE IN-GAME ITEM

ENTER THIS CODE

7. CLICK "CONTINUE"
8. YOU'RE IN! NOW CLICK THE SC ICON IN THE GAME DOCK!
9. SELECT THE "CLAIM" BUTTON TO LOAD THE ITEM CLAIM SCREEN
10. YOU'LL SEE THE CLOAK OF SHADOWS ITEM IN YOUR PENDING CLAIMS. SELECT IT BY RUNNING THE CURSOR OVER IT AND LEFT-CLICKING, THEN CLICKING ON THE GREEN "CLAIM" BUTTON ON THE RIGHT!
11. ENJOY YOUR CLOAK OF SHADOWS

EXISTING ACCOUNTS

1. LOG IN AND LAUNCH ***FREE REALMS*** USING THE ACCOUNT AND CHARACTER WHO WILL RECEIVE THE REWARD.
2. SELECT THE SC ICON ON THE GAME DOCK
3. SELECT THE "CLAIM" BUTTON TO LOAD THE ITEMS CLAIM SCREEN
4. ENTER THE CODE INTO THE TEXT FIELD IN THE "REDEEM-A-CODE" BOX ON THE TOP OF THE WINDOW
5. YOU'LL SEE THE CLOAK OF SHADOWS ITEM IN YOUR PENDING CLAIMS. SELECT IT BY RUNNING THE CURSOR OVER IT AND LEFT-CLICKING, THEN CLICKING ON THE GREEN "CLAIM" BUTTON ON THE RIGHT!
6. ENJOY YOUR CLOAK OF SHADOWS

CLOAK OF SHADOWS

FOR OUR READERS WHO HAVE PURCHASED ISSUES 1-4 AND HAVE REDEEMED THE SPECIAL CODE FOR EACH ISSUE, YOU'LL RECEIVE A SPECIAL BONUS ITEM OF THE EERIE GI ...SUPER COOL NINJA GEAR! IT'S JUST A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR LOYAL READERS! KEEP COLLECTING SINCE WE MAY HAVE MORE SURPRISES IN STORE!

EERIE GI

THE STORM FRONT

This January, we're bringing two titles closer together and spinning off two new titles to ring in the new year! Long-time WildStorm fans should be familiar with "puzzle-covers," where one cover fits with another to form one blockbuster image—and that's what you'll find on every cover for WILDCATS and THE AUTHORITY for the whole year! Not only does it emphasize the combined continuity between these two flagship titles, but it's also a great showcase for new covers that are literally packed with your favorite WildStorm characters.

You've no doubt seen a couple of these instant classic covers on our WildStorm blog by now, but if you haven't, then you're missing out on action-packed images by George Perez, Mark Bagley, Marcus To, Chris Sprouse, Talent Caldwell, Walt Simonson, Howard Porter and Pete Woods, just to name some of the superstar talent we've assembled to highlight WildStorm's new direction for 2010 and beyond!

Of course, the covers aren't the ONLY things to get excited about…you get new creative teams, too. Beechen & Seeley and Bernardin, Freeman & Barrionuevo: they've picked their favorite characters from the WSU, mixed and mashed and come up with some great stories…featuring some surprising lineups. Don't miss out!

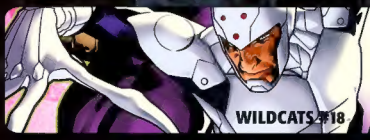
A new year also is the perfect time to unleash two new titles from last month's shattering *World of Warcraft* event with WORLD OF WARCRAFT: ALLIANCE #26 by Mike Costa and Neil Googe and a new ongoing WORLD OF WARCRAFT: HORDE series by Doug Wagner and Pop Mhan.

New combined covers! New creative teams! New story arcs! 2010 is so new, it's even got that new car smell!

Best,

Jim Lee

OUT THIS MONTH!



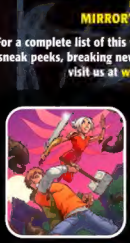
COLLECTED EDITIONS:

EX MACHINA: THE DELUXE EDITION BOOK TWO
EX MACHINA: DIRTY TRICKS TPB
FRINGE TPB
MIRROR'S EDGE TPB

For a complete list of this week's titles, sneak peeks, breaking news and more, visit us at **wildstorm.com**

IN STORES DECEMBER:

THE AUTHORITY #17
THE AUTHORITY: THE LOST YEAR #4
DANTE'S INFERNO #1
EX MACHINA #47
FREDDY vs. JASON vs. ASH: NIGHTMARE WARRIORS #6
FREE REALMS #4
GEN13 #33
MODERN WARFARE: GHOST #2
NORTH 40 #6
RED HERRING #5
STARCRAFT #7
VICTORIAN UNDEAD #2
WILDCATS #18
WORLD OF WARCRAFT SPECIAL #1



NEXT ISSUE: FREE REALMS #5

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IS THAT ALL?
THERE'S ONE MORE THING...
AND THAT IS?
I'LL NEED YOUR WEAPONS.
COME ON, MAYA. IF THEY WANTED TO, WE COULD HAVE BEEN PART OF A CHUGAWUG STEW TONIGHT. WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?
FINE.
BUT IF I SEE EVEN ONE SCRATCH, I'M COMING AFTER YOU.
FAIR ENOUGH. YOUR WEAPONS WILL BE RIGHT HERE WAITING FOR YOU. IN FACT, I'LL GUARD THEM MYSELF.
AREN'T YOU COMING IN WITH US?
I'M AFRAID I'M NOT ALLOWED INSIDE UNLESS I'VE BEEN SUMMONED.
THAT'S LAME.
IF YOU WILL FOLLOW ME?

NOW THIS IS WHAT I CALL LIVING LIKE A ROCK STAR.
WHERE'S THE HOT TUB?
WILL YOU PLEASE BE QUIET?
WHAT? CAN'T YOU SEE YOURSELF SITTING UP THERE WITH A BUNCH OF GIRLS FEEDING YOU GRAPES AND FANNING YOU?
DO YOU REALLY WANT ME TO ANSWER THAT?
YOUR MAJESTY.
RISE, GLOOMPETAL.
I WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE THE QUEEN'S MESSENGERS.
I PREFER THE TERM "SIDEKICK."
EXCUSE ME, YOUR MAJESTY.
THIS IS HIS SIDEKICK, MAYA.
I AM GOING TO KILL YOU.
WELCOME, HONORED GUESTS.
IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT YOU BRING NEWS FROM SANCTUARY.

YES, MAJESTY. THE QUEEN IS DYING, AND...
NO...NOT VALERIAN!
MY SISTER IS ALL THAT I HAVE LEFT IN THIS DARK WORLD...
To be continued...